

**MINUTES**  
**COUNCIL DISTRICT ADVISORY**  
**TASK FORCE**

**Tuesday, February 25, 2003**



**Human Resources Pinnacle Room**  
**7575 E. Main Street**  
**Scottsdale, Arizona**

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**TASK FORCE**  
**Tuesday, February 25, 2003**

Present:	Jeffrey Abts	William McCluskey
	Susan Bitter Smith	Michael Pickett (via conference call)
	James Derouin	Roberta Pilcher
	Suzanne Klapp	Wendy Riddell
	Barbara Klein	Donald Scott
	George Knowlton	Lida Stewart
	Wendy Lyons	James Wellington

Also Present:

Deputy City Attorney Donna Bronski  
Government Relations Coordinator Peggy Carpenter  
Deputy City Clerk Carolyn Jagger  
Executive Assistant Jeff Kulaga

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Susan Bitter Smith called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

**SPEAKERS**

Speaker Rick Naimark, Executive Assistant to the Phoenix City Manager discussed his city's experience with a district form of government. Points of discussion included:

- Nothing is simple, arguments can be made both for and against districts.
- 60.9% of US Cities have at large systems, 16.8% have district only systems, and 22.3% have a mixed (some elected at large, some by district) system.
- Districting usually occurs one of two ways, either by choice or by initiative.
- Some of the arguments in support of districting include: improves responsiveness from government, allows for one person as a point of contact, representation for communities of interest, and diversity of representation.
- Some of the arguments or concerns raised regarding districting include: logrolling, vote trading, loss of efficiencies, narrower focus on district issues and less focus on citywide concerns.
- Care should be taken when making comparisons to cities with circumstances that are different from Scottsdale. Examples cited included cities that grant their Mayors different powers of authority, cities with different or no term limits, and cities, such as Tucson that hold partisan elections.

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- As a whole, Phoenix Councilmembers have not adopted an all or nothing focus. However, some change or narrowing in focus to local issues has occurred.
- More diversity on the input side of policy-making has occurred—definitely receiving more input directly from residents.
- Council has had to work as a team and interact more with each other to sort through the information they receive.
- Service delivery lines were not changed when Phoenix implemented districting. However, interest in service related issues focused more on local issues, and Council interest in service delivery issues increased.
- People tend to call their Councilmember about service delivery issues rather than staff.
- Communication regarding constituent service issues increased, while communication regarding policy-making issues decreased.
- The level of communication has risen substantially, and there is more resident input to the organization through the Council under the district system.
- Councilmembers are spending more time at neighborhood meetings—from once per week before districting to four per night after.
- Phoenix does have staff that work with their elected officials. Prior to districting, in 1982-83, 24 staff members served the Council, which quickly rose to 38 staff members after districting. Today, there are 66 city staff members directly assigned to the Council. Mr. Naimark reminded the group that during a 10-year period, Phoenix experienced a 34% increase in population, so it is difficult to say how much of the staff increase is directly related to districting.
- The Phoenix City Council's budget is \$5.2 million. Mr. Naimark did not have itemized budget figures, but offered to forward this information to the Task Force.
- Mr. Naimark expressed his opinion that it is important to establish a network of liaisons to assist the Council and facilitate communication on a daily basis.
- Mr. Naimark stated that he believes Phoenix to be a well-managed city with good processes in place.
- The Mayor and Council try to balance appointments to boards and commissions so that there is equal representation from each district.

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- More interaction between staff and elected officials has occurred, especially regarding customer service issues.
- The City of Phoenix spends approximately \$250,000 for redistricting. Much of this money is spent on public outreach.
- The cost of elections did increase, primarily due to the different number of ballots that have to be printed.

Speaker Martin Vanacour, former City Manager of Glendale discussed Glendale's experience with districting. Points of discussion included:

- Glendale's population was 120,000 when districting was implemented; currently, the population is 250,000.
- Is there a best system? The answer is no. The best system for a city depends on current circumstances, the city's goals, and what the Council and citizens want to accomplish.
- In 1988, Glendale voters approved a six-district system. In 1990, half the Council was elected by district. In 1992, Glendale had a full district Council and the Mayor was elected at large.
- One of the big surprises Glendale citizens experienced with districting was when they realized they could only vote for two people: the Mayor and their district Councilmember.
- Glendale hired a consultant to assist with the districting process because of the complexity of the issue and the tremendous amount of public outreach and communication that had to occur. Mr. Vanacour noted that there are very few companies in the country that are qualified to do this type of specialized work.
- The US Justice Department has a big role in the process and can slow the process down if the City is not doing things the right way.
- The conversion to districting took a major portion of the incumbent Council's time.
- Once districting was approved, Glendale made a major commitment to train staff. One of the most important aspects of this was learning to think small. In addition, modifications to computer software had to be made so that statistics and reports could be generated by district rather than citywide.
- Council spends a tremendous amount of time communicating and assisting citizens. Individual concerns are well taken care of, but the downside to this is that you can only help one person for so long.

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- Councilmembers tend to be more powerful within their own districts. Mayor is more powerful citywide.
- Glendale experienced an increase in candidates for the first district election, but experienced the same number of candidates for subsequent elections.
- When districting was approved, Glendale immediately built an office for each Councilmember at city hall and hired seven new employees. On several occasions, Council has asked for a one to one ratio for staff assistance, but that has yet to be approved.
- Councilmembers tend to be “mini Mayors” in their own districts, but are still interested in the big, citywide issues.
- Cities must redistrict every five to ten years—highly recommends using paid consultant to insure it is done correctly.
- In addition to a budget for travel expenses and operating expenses, Councilmembers each have a \$20,000 “public works” budget that can be used for doing projects within their respective districts.
- It is easier to recall an elected district official because of the relatively small number of signatures that are needed.
- When pressed to identify the most significant change with districting, Mr. Vanacour responded, “thinking small.” He has not observed the Council playing district games.
- Glendale spent between \$100,000 to \$150,000 on the conversion to a district system, but felt it was important to do it right. It is just a process. You hire lawyers and consultants and proceed.

**MINUTES**

**Hearing no additions or corrections, the chair called for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2003 meeting of the District Advisory Task Force. George Knowlton so moved, which was seconded by Roberta Pilcher.**

**REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF MATERIALS**

Dr. Barbara Klein gave an overview of her handout, *Abbreviated and Abridged Report prepared by Dr. Barbara Klein for local use, based on “Major Election Systems and their Relevance to the State of Arizona”* that was included in the packet. Dr. Klein also gave a brief explanation of a memo to the Council District Advisory Task Force that she handed out at the meeting (copy attached).

Dr. Klein asked the group if there was interest in having a speaker from the Center for Voter Democracy. There was no interest at this time.

Mr. James Derouin gave a brief explanation of his handout, Updated Form of Government Chart, noting for the record, the following statistics: 47 cities listed on the chart have a population between 180,000 to 280,000. 27 (47%) of these cities have a full Council district system, 8 (18%) have an at large system, and 12 (25%) have a mixed system. Of the 47 cities, Scottsdale is the sixth largest in geographic area, but the seventh least dense in population.

**AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING/FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE**

The Chair reviewed the agendas for the regular meeting of March 4 and the public hearing on March 5.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Task Force member Roberta Pilcher moved to adjourn. Task Force member George Knowlton seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m. The next meeting of the District Advisory Task Force is 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 4, 2003 in the Human Resources Pinnacle Room.**

**C E R T I F I C A T E**

I hereby certify that the foregoing Minutes are a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Council District Advisory Task Force held on the 25th day of February 2003.

I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that a quorum was present.

**DATED** this \_\_\_\_ day of March 2003.

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**CAROLYN JAGGER**  
Deputy City Clerk